

## **Emerging issues facing the Medicare benefit package**

**ISSUE:** Medicare has been largely successful in meeting its original goals of financial protection and access to care. However, it is important to consider whether there are trends in the composition of the Medicare population and in the scope and delivery of medical care that might make its future success less certain. These trends and their potential impact on the Medicare benefit package are presented in the accompanying chapter.

**KEY POINTS:** The goal of this presentation is to receive guidance from commissioners regarding the following issues:

- Most relevant demographic trends: increasing Medicare population; increasing proportion of oldest old; increasing under-65 disabled population; and decreasing rate of disability among elderly.
- Three Medicare cohorts based on their health status: generally healthy cohort; chronically ill cohort; and the terminally ill cohort.
- Key concerns about the benefit package: outpatient prescription drugs; care coordination; preventive services; mental health services; dental services; and vision and hearing.

**ACTION:** We would also like the Commission to comment on whether this chapter presents an adequate and comprehensive background as well as provides compelling reasons for the options delineated in the June Report for changing the benefit package. Specifically, are important topics missing, are topics presented in sufficient detail and scope, should certain topics be eliminated, and is the tone consistent with the other chapters that comprise the June Report.

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